

the Examiner's requirement for a new title. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Objection To The Title

In item 3 on page 2 of the Office Action, the title was objected to as not being descriptive. Applicants request that the title be changed as set forth above. Accordingly, Applicants request withdrawal of the objection to the title.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In item 11 on pages 4-9 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 8-10, 12-14, 16-18, and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shear (U.S. Patent No. 5,410,598). Also, in item 12 on pages 9 and 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected dependent claims 11, 15, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shear in view of Allen (U.S. Patent No. 5,418,713). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for the reasons presented below.

Independent claim 8 of the present invention recites, as amended, "... information converting means for converting digital information received by said digital information receiving means and digital information read by said drive means into at least one of visible and audible data; switch means for switching a one-way connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, and said drive means and said information converting means; and outputting means, connected to said information converting means, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data."

The Shear reference does not disclose one-way communication, as indicated by the Examiner on page 4, for example, of the Office Action. The Examiner considered the addition of the one-way connection language of claim 8 to be removing a feature, and has taken official notice that removal of features is an obvious variation, citing In re Karlson, 136 USPQ 184, 186, 311 F2d 581 (CCPA 1963) in support of his assertion.

“[O]mission of an element and its function in a combination is an obvious expedient **if the remaining elements perform the same functions as before,**” (emphasis added). See In re Karlson at 136 USPQ 186. Use of one-way communications in Shear would change the function of Shear. If one-way communications are used in the invention of Shear, encrypted data sent from the host computer 200 to the decoder/biller 300 would merely be decrypted by the decoder/biller 300, and the host computer 200 would not be able to use the decrypted data. Thus, unlike the present invention, Shear must use two-way communications.

Similar to claim 8, independent claims 12, 16, and 20-23 recite language similar to that of claim 8.

Independent claims 12 recites, as amended, “... a converter converting digital information received by said digital information receiver and digital information read by said drive device into at least one of visible and audible data; a switch switching a one-way connection between said digital information receiver and said converter, between said digital information receiver and said drive device, and between said drive device and said converter; and an output device, connected to said converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.”

Independent claim 16 recites, as amended, “... a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data; ... a first switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the converter as a one-way connection ..., a second switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection ..., and a third switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection ...; and an output device, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.”

Independent claim 20 recites, as amended, “... a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data; ... a first switch configuration which ... connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter as a one-way connection ..., a second switch configuration which ... connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter and the decoder as a one-way connection ..., a third switch configuration which ... connects the digital data read from the storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection ..., a fourth switch configuration which ... connects the

digital data read from the storage medium to the converter and the decoder as a one-way connection ..., and a fifth switch configuration which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection ...; and an output device, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.”

Independent claim 21 recites, as amended, “a first switch position which connects digital data provided by a communication path to a converter as a one-way connection that converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data; a second switch position which connects digital data read from a storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data; and a third switch position which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium, wherein an output device, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputs the at least one of visible and audible data.”

Independent claim 22 recites, as amended, “first means for connecting digital data provided by a communication path to a converter as a one-way connection that converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data; second means for connecting digital data read from a storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data; third means for connecting the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium; and outputting means, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.”

Independent claim 23 recites, as amended, “... information converting means for converting digital information received by said digital information receiving means and digital information read by said drive means into at least one of visible and audible data; switch means for switching a connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, and said drive means and said information converting means; ... and outputting means,

connected to said information converting means, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.”

Thus, it is submitted that independent claims 8, 12, 16, and 20-23 patentably distinguish over the prior art. As for the dependent claims, the dependent claims depend from the above-discussed independent claims and are patentable over the prior art for the reasons discussed above.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claims 8-23 patentably distinguish over the prior art. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under § 103.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all outstanding objections and rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot, and further, that all pending claims patentably distinguish over the prior art. Thus, there being no further outstanding rejections, the application is submitted to be in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Finally, if there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

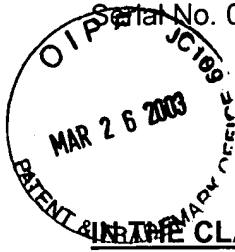
Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 3/26/03

By: C. Joan Gilsdorf
Christine Joan Gilsdorf
Registration No. 43,635

700 Eleventh Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 434-1500



VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

RECEIVED
APR 08 2003
GROUP 3600

IN THE CLAIMS

Please **AMEND** the following claims:

8. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) An apparatus comprising:
digital information receiving means for receiving digital information provided via a communication medium;
drive means for reading digital information from, and writing digital information to, a [removable] storage medium;
information converting means for converting digital information received by said digital information receiving means and digital information read by said drive means into at least one of visible and audible data; [and]
switch means for switching a one-way connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, and said drive means and said information converting means;
and
outputting means, connected to said information converting means, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.

12. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) An apparatus comprising:
a digital information receiver receiving digital information provided via a communication medium;
a drive device reading digital information from, and writing information to, a [removable] storage medium;
a converter converting digital information received by said digital information receiver and digital information read by said drive device into at least one of visible and audible data; [and]
a switch switching a one-way connection between said digital information receiver and said converter, between said digital information receiver and said drive device, and between said drive device and said converter; and

an output device, connected to said converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.

16. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) An apparatus comprising:

a communication path providing digital data;

a storage medium storing digital data;

a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data; [and]

a switch having

a first switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data,

a second switch position which connects digital data read from the storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data, and

a third switch position which connects digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium; and

an output device, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.

20. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) An apparatus comprising:

a communication path providing digital data;

a storage medium storing digital data;

a converter converting digital data into at least one of visible and audible data;

a decoder decoding encrypted digital data; [and]

a switch having

a first switch configuration which, when non-encrypted digital data is provided by the communication path, connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter as a one-way connection without passing through the decoder so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data,

a second switch configuration which, when encrypted digital data is provided by the communication path, connects the digital information provided by the communication path to the converter and the decoder as a one-way connection so that the encrypted digital data is decoded by the decoder and then the decoded digital data is converted by the converter into at least one of visible and audible data,

a third switch configuration which, when non-encrypted digital data is read from the storage medium, connects the digital data read from the storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection without passing through the decoder so that the converter converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data,

a fourth switch configuration which, when encrypted digital data is read from the storage medium, connects the digital data read from the storage medium to the converter and the decoder as a one-way connection so that the encrypted digital data is decoded by the decoder and then the decoded digital data is converted by the converter into at least one of visible and audible data, and

a fifth switch configuration which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium; and

an output device, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.

21. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) A switch comprising:

a first switch position which connects digital data provided by a communication path to a converter as a one-way connection that converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data;

a second switch position which connects digital data read from a storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data; and

a third switch position which connects the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium,

wherein an output device, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputs the at least one of visible and audible data.

22. (THREE TIMES AMENDED) An apparatus comprising:

first means for connecting digital data provided by a communication path to a converter as a one-way connection that converts the digital data into at least one of visible and audible data;

second means for connecting digital data read from a storage medium to the converter as a one-way connection so that the converter converts the digital data read from the storage medium into at least one of visible and audible data; [and]

third means for connecting the digital data provided by the communication path to the storage medium as a one-way connection so that the digital data provided via the communication path is stored in the storage medium; and

outputting means, connected to the converter, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.

23. (ONCE AMENDED) An apparatus comprising:

digital information receiving means for receiving digital information provided via a communication medium;

drive means for reading digital information from, and writing digital information to, a storage medium;

information converting means for converting digital information received by said digital information receiving means and digital information read by said drive means into at least one of visible and audible data;

switch means for switching a connection between one of said digital information receiving means and said information converting means, said digital information receiving means and said drive means, and said drive means and said information converting means; [and]

selecting means for selecting one of said digital information received by said digital information receiving means and said digital information read by said drive means and inputting the selected digital information to said information converting means to obtain at least one of visible and audible data based on the selected digital information, which is received from different types of digital information sources; and

Serial No. 09/654,929

Docket No. 1046.1100RE

outputting means, connected to said information converting means, visibly and audibly outputting the at least one of visible and audible data.